



P.E.T. PUBLICATIONS

ASHURA

Events of Karbala



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MAJLIS 4
PURCHASING THE PLACE OF KARBALA
AND ADDRESS OF IMAM HUSAYN

The friends and followers of Imam Husayn (a.s.) who had accompanied him were from different walks of life but all of them had something in common amongst them - their undying love and affection for him and their supreme faith in the justice of this cause. Some of them were free men - soldiers, bold and true. Others were slaves who had come there with their masters but without any compulsion.

When the caravan of Imam Husayn (a.s.) reached a place near the Euphrates (Nehr-e-Furat), the Holy Imam's horse suddenly stopped and did not move, as if to say that it could not step forward anymore. Imam Husayn (a.s.) changed six horses, one after another, but none of the animals moved from the spot. Gathering the

people in the neighborhood, Imam Husayn (a.s.) enquired the name of the place. Some said “Maria”, some said “Nainawa” and some said “Shattul Furat” but the Holy Imam (a.s.) was not satisfied and continued his enquiry asking if there was any other name for the place. An old man stepped forward and said “O son of the Prophet, I have heard from my ancestors this plain being called Karbala.” He said that this place had been very unlucky for all the Prophets and he requested Imam Husayn (a.s.) not to stay here. It has been related that Prophet Adam (a.s.) descended on earth he could not find Eve, so he started looking for her in every direction. During his search, he passed through Karbala and stumbled upon this place, injuring his legs. The old man further added that Prophet Nuh’s ark while drifting around the world passed over Karbala and lost its balance there so much so that Nuh (a.s.) feared it might sink. The moment Imam Husayn (a.s.) heard the name of Karbala,

he thanked Allah stating that the mud of Karbala will be a *Khaq-e-Shifa* for all mankind after the innocent blood of the Holy Prophet's family dripped on it. He said:

“Surely this is the place where my grandfather had prophesized that I, with all my faithful companions will lay slain after suffering 3 days hunger and thirst. Here will the garden of Sayyeda Fatimah (s.a.) be cut and destroyed. I have reached the destined destination.”

Imam Husayn (a.s.) ordered the caravan to be stopped there and declared that the journey had ended and he had arrived at the desired destination. Imam Husayn (a.s.) ordered the tents to be pitched by the banks of the river Euphrates known as the Al-Qama and Nehr-e-Furat. Imam Husayn (a.s.) purchased the land and gifted it to the people of Banu Asad. When Sayyeda Zainab (s.a.) heard about the decision of purchasing the place and camping there, started weeping and

said “Dear brother, do not camp here. My heart is restless and does not consent. Since our arrival on this plain, I distinctly hear the lamenting voice of our dear mother, wailing somewhere nearby in this desert.” Imam Husayn (a.s.) hearing his mother’s name started crying and said “Zainab, we need not fear where Allah is with us. It is immaterial, sister, where we camp. This is the place, dear sister I was in quest of and now I cannot move from here.”

Imam Husayn (a.s.) gathered the people of the surrounding places, and addressing the males among them said: “On the 10th day (Ashura) of this month Muharram, you shall see us lying here, slain, our bodies lying on the plain with our heads severed and taken away. I request you to kindly bury us.” He then addressed the ladies: “O ladies, If your husbands fearing the wrath of Yazid, do not bury us, you kindly encourage them or do it yourselves.” Imam Husayn (a.s.) then

turned to the young children in the gathering and addressing them said: “O innocent ones, if your parents, out of fear for the wrath of Yazid, do not bury us, you may by way of playing bring some mud in your laps and throw it upon our bodies and hide them.”

The appeal was so touching that the whole gathering started weeping bitterly. It is an undeniable truth that the kind of faithful companions Imam Husayn (a.s.) had gathered around him was not granted to any of the prophets including the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.), and Imam Ali (a.s.) and Imam Hasan (a.s.). They were person who relegated all personal considerations and did not for a moment think of what could happen to their wives and children who survived them. The only thought uppermost in their minds was to protect and defend Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his family. Among these faithful ones were eight eminent

companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) such as Muslim bin Ausaja, Zaheer bin Amr Kindi, Habib ibn Mazahir and Sabeeb bin Abdullah. There were also loyal admirers of Ahlul Bayt like Burair e Hamdani, Saeed bin Abdullah, Jabl bin Qaraza, Shahid bin Abdullah, Safi bin Haris and Saleem bin Amr Kalbi.

In the meantime Hur who had also arrived at Karbala received a message from Ubaidullah Ibn Ziyad commanding him to stop Imam Husayn (a.s.) from proceeding any further and forcing him to camp at a grassless and shadeless site, without any defensive position. The messenger had been commanded to report how far Ibn Ziyads order had been carried out. This was the 2nd of Muharram.

On the 3rd of Muharram, Obaidullah ibn Ziyad sent an army of 4,000 led by Umar ibn Saad Abi Waqas. His orders where to get Imam Husayn

(a.s.) to surrender to Yazid. When Imam Husayn (a.s.) refused, Umar ibn Saad asked Ibne Ziyad to send more troops.

Regiment after regiment began to pour in on the plain of Karbala from all sides until they were 30,000 and ultimately Yazid's forces compelled Imam Husayn (a.s.) to shift his camp from the bank of the river to the interior of the desert. Imam Husayn's (a.s.) brother, the lion hearted Abbas objected to this demand from the enemy, claiming priority of occupation and the right of the son of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) to stay where they had first camped. Knowing the bravery and prowess of the brave son of Ali (a.s.) none cared to step forward. But Imam Husayn (a.s.) called his brother and put his hand on his shoulder and said:

“Brother Abbas, let not bloodshed be initiated from our side. Let them occupy any place they like. They call themselves my Grandfathers

followers. Let them enjoy every comfort they want. When Allah is with us, brother, what if the river is far away from us.” With these words, Imam Husayn (a.s.) issued orders to shift his camp several miles into the interiors of the sizzling desert and it was immediately done. Imam Husayn (a.s.) did not want the people to think that the battle of Karbala was about water.

MAJLIS 5
HOW IMAM HUSSAYN AND HIS FOLLOWERS
SPEND THE LAST NIGHT?

At last on the 7th of Muharram, the commander of Yazid's forces received orders to cut off all sources of supply to Imam Husayn's (a.s.) camp and not allow even a drop of water to reach any of the inmates therein.

Hakim ka hukm tha ke paani basher piye Ghoray piyen, sawar piyen, sutoor piyen Kafir talak piyen to mana na kijiyo Magar Fatimah ke lal ko pani na dijiyo" (It was the order of the Governor that water should be given to every human, animal and disbeliever but should under no circumstances be given to Imam Husayn (a.s.) - the dear son of Sayyeda Fatimah (s.a.) - allowed to have water.)

It can better be imagined than described what

the condition of Imam Husayn's (a.s.) camp would have been under the scorching Arabian sun. The camp was in the middle of the burning desert, with the heat waves blowing from all sides. The unavailability of water with nothing to feed even the young children, the wriggling of the babies for milk which the poor mothers, who were themselves suffering from the killing thirst, could not give, caused distress. It is very difficult for any human mind to conceive the unbearable tortures Imam Husayn (a.s.) his family and his companions had to suffer.

When the whole plain of Karbala was full of Yazid's regiments and Imam Husayn's (a.s.) camp was totally surrounded by the enemy's forces, Umar Ibn Saad (the commander) met Imam Husayn (a.s.) and said "if you accept the bayt of Yazid, everything will go well for you and what ever worldly comforts and privileges you desire for, will be at your disposal. Otherwise,

it will end in whole sale massacre of yourself and all your dear ones here.” Imam Husayn (a.s.) firmly refused to pay the allegiance (Bayt).

When all efforts of the Yazid’s forces through temptations, persecutions and tortures, to persuade Imam Husayn (a.s.), to yield to Yazid were in vane, the enemy forces advanced towards the camp of Imam (a.s.). It was on the afternoon of 9th Muharram when Umar Ibn Saad prepared to start the battle with Imam Husayn (a.s.). Upon being informed of the situation by his brother Abbas (a.s.), Imam Husayn (a.s.) requested him to see if a break for one night can be obtained so that they could offer prayers and seek forgiveness of Allah.

Imam Husayn (a.s.) purpose in asking for this time was to fold, apart from being able to spend this night in devotion and praying to Allah, it would give another opportunity to his men to

access the extend of their loyalty to their Imam and whether they would be able to sacrifice their lives for him. If unable to take such an important step, they would still be able to leave under the cover of night and not suffer any embarrassment and shame. When it was finally known that the battle had been put off for the night Imam Husayn (a.s.) gathered his companions and addressed them thus:

“You are all free, my companions, members of my family, my sons and my nephews - everyone - to leave without being liable to anything. I release you from the oath and you may go free. They have nothing against anyone except me. Take advantage of the night and depart, leave me to my fate and save yourself. They will definitely not stop you.”

At the end of the speech, Imam Husayn (a.s.) asked Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) to put off the candle in the tent so that people may walk away in the

darkness without being ashamed of being seen by him; but the faithful companions and relatives of Imam Husayn (a.s.) were standing silently with heads bent and tears flowing from their eyes. After a while, when Imam Husayn (a.s.) saw that they would not budge an inch, he lighted the candles again. At last the silence was broken by Habib Ibn Mazahir who spoke on behalf of all the faithful companions: "Husayn, to us you are everything. How can we explain you that for each one of us life would be meaningless burden without you. O Son of the prophet, we will not leave you until we die before you." The sentiments expressed by Habib Ibn Mazahir were echoed by all the faithful companions - Muslim Ibn Ausaja, Burair e Hamadani, Zuhair Ibn Qain, Jawn and others. The small group of pious souls, who were sincere in their desires to fight in the way of Allah, spent the night in prayers and in reciting the holy Quran. Everyone was anxiously waiting for the break of dawn, to lay down his life in the

way of Allah in supporting the cause of truth. Even the brave and courageous ladies in spite of the critical situation were praying Namaz-e-Shab and preparing the young children for the Martyrdom the following morning. Sayyeda Zainab said to her sons “my sons, tomorrow there will be a battle. I cannot ask you to fight because you are young but if anything happens to Imam Husayn (a.s.) while you are still alive, I will be filled with shame.” Both Aun and Muhammad stood up and said “Mother, we have the blood of Ali and Jaffer in our veins. Our grandfathers were warriors whose fame will always be remembered. Do you think we can possibly shame them? Mother, unless you forbid us and stop us from fighting, we shall go to the battlefield and show the enemies of Islam how bravely the children of Islam can fight.” Tears of joy and fright flowed down from Sayyeda Zainab’s eyes as she embraced her two boys.

When Imam Husayn (a.s.) was passing by Umme Farwa's (the widow of Imam Hasan) tent he heard her saying: "Qasim my son, I want to remind you about your duty towards your uncle Imam Husayn (a.s.) with the unique love your father had for Imam Husayn (a.s.), how he, if alive, would have felt today. He would have been the first to sacrifice his life for his beloved younger brother. On his death bed he told me that a day will come when my brother Husayn (a.s.) will need the sacrifice of his near and dear ones. Though I will not live see that they, as my last wish I want you to prepare Qasim for it from his childhood. It is your duty towards your uncle as a representative of your father to lay down your life for him before nay of his sons and brothers and companions."

Qasim listened to his mother obediently and replied that how was it possible for him, to be oblivious of his obligations to his uncle. He told

his mother that death would be far better than life without Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his dear uncle Abbas (a.s.).

Sayyeda Kulsoom was praying and lamenting that she had nobody to present to Imam Husayn (a.s.) to fight against the enemy in the way of Islam. Then Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) went inside the tent and pacified Sayyeda Kulsoom and told her that he will represent her.

Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his companions passed the night of Ashura in Prayers. In the darkness of the night when Imam Husayn (a.s.) was walking along the battlefield, he raised his hands in prayers to Allah and said: “My Allah! You are my guide in my hopes and support in my difficulties. I place reliance on you in all my troubles. I submit to you and represent you as I know none accept you who I should represent.” At this stage he could hear the weeping of a

lady who was clearing the place where her son would lay down his life on the day of Ashura. It was Sayyeda Fatimah (s.a.) who had raised Imam Husayn (a.s.) and Imam Hasan (a.s.) with all the love and care and about whom the Holy Prophet (s.a.) had said “these two - Hasan and Husayn - shall be the leaders the youths of paradise.”

MAJLIS 6
MORNING OF ASHURA AND MARTYRDOM
OF HUR, AUN, MUHAMMAD AND
OTHERS COMPANIONS

At the dawn break of the fateful day, 10th Muharram, Imam Husayn (a.s.) called his son Ali Akbar (who resembled the Holy Prophet) and said: “My dear son, Ali, let me hear the *Azaan* (The call for prayer) for the last time in this world.” Ali Akbar gave the *Azaan* in the desert of Karbala. Reporters say that the voice resembled the voice of the Holy Prophet and Imam Husayn (a.s.) hearing the last *Azaan* of his son, shed tears and wept bitterly. It was the 3rd day of the thirst and hunger inflicted on the whole camp of Imam Hussain (a.s.). Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his devotees performed *tayammum* instead of *wuzu* and Imam Husayn (a.s.) offered the last congregational prayers with his companions. In the meantime, the army of the enemy became

ready for the battle. Umar ibn Saad placed Amr bin Hajjaj on the right flank (*Maimana*), Shimr on the left flank (*Maisara*), Azr bin Qais at the head of the cavalry and Shis bin Rabbi on the head of the infantry. Imam Husayn's (a.s.) camp consisting of 32 horsemen and 40 infantry took up defensive positions. Imam Husayn (a.s.) placed Zuhair bin Qain on the right flank (*Maimana*), Habib ibn Mazahir on the left flank (*Maisara*) and Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) at the centre as the standard bearer of his small army of Holy warriors.

When the sun had risen fairly high Umar ibn Saad called his slave Duraïd bearing his standard to stand by his side, and then he himself shot an arrow towards Imam Husayn (a.s.) saying: "Witness, the 1st arrow shot in the battle towards Hussain is by me." Thereafter others from his side followed and in a few minutes thousands of arrows were shot at Imam Husayn's (a.s.) army. Imam Husayn (a.s.) reacted by announcing to his

companions “Rise to welcome death (*shahadat*), Allah may bless you. These arrows speak of the commencement of the battle.”

First of all Yasir and Salim the 2 slaves of Ibn Ziyad, emerged from the enemy lines and threw challenge for individual combat. Abdullah bin Umair Kalbi was permitted by Imam Husayn (a.s.) to accept the challenge. He was a citizen of Kufa having a brilliant record of experience in fighting. Abdullah succeeded in killing both Salim and Yasir but lost his fingers because of a blow from Salims sword.

Hur now sought permission from Imam Husayn (a.s.) to advance and meet the challenge of the enemy. He appeared before Imam Husayn (a.s.) with tears in his eyes and begged his pardon for the wrong he had done “O my Imam, I am so sorry for forcing you to come to Karbala. Please allow me to fight, I would be honored if you would let

me lay down my life first before anyone of you is killed and let my son die with me defending your sons.” Mounting his horse Hur rode out with his son and slave. Pausing before the army of Yazid, he delivered a speech telling the enemy that only till the previous night he was with them but when the realization of what he was doing had dawned on him he had decided to go over to the side of truth and justice represented by Imam Husayn (a.s.). He quoted them verses from the Quran to the effect that killing of an innocent camel of a Prophet had brought down the wrath of Allah. He asked them to reflect on what their killing of the beloved grandson of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.), whom he had loved so much, would bring down on them. His words cast a magnetic spell on the force of Yazid. Shimr realized that all would be lost if Hur was allowed to speak further to the army under his command. He whispered to Umar ibn Saad to order his men to attack Hur, his son and his slave without meeting them in single

combat, though such an attack was against the accepted rules of battle in those days. Umar ibn Saad at once ordered his army to launch a mass attack on the 3 of them and promised rewards to those who succeeded in killing them. Hur rushed through the enemy ranks, attacked bravely and laid down his life, after killing more than 40 of his enemies. First to fall was Hur's son and then his slave.

Imam Husayn (a.s.) rushed towards him and found him with a big and deep cut on the head. Even at that moment Hur had a desire to hear that Imam Husayn (a.s.) had forgiven him.

Imam Husayn (a.s.) took his scarf which had belonged to his mother Sayyeda Fatimah (s.a.) and bandaged his wound and cleaned his eyes from blood. Hur told Imam Husayn "Did I do well and are you satisfied?" The last thing Hur heard before he breathed his last was Imam Husayn

(a.s.) telling him “Your mother made the right choice by naming you Hur (the free man).”

After Hur, came the turn of the other companions of Imam Husayn (a.s.). Each one of them was ready to sacrifice his life first in defending Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his family. Habib ibn Mazahir, Muslim ibn Ausaja, Burair Hamdani, Zuhair Ibn Qain, Jawn and others went out to fight against tremendous odds, killed many warriors of Yazid’s army and fell fighting bravely against the attack of a host of enemies. From early morning, Imam Husayn (a.s.) together with Hazrat Abbas, Ali Akber and others carried the bodies of their companions back to the camp. Although these brave soldiers did not have their own families to mourn their death, the ladies in Imam Hussain’s (a.s.) camp cried for them as if they were part of their own family.

Imam Husayn’s (a.s.) companions having all laid

down their lives to uphold his cause, it was now the turn of his sons, brothers and nephews to prove their mettle. Sayeda Zainab (s.a.), called her 2 young sons, Aun and Muhammad, aged 10 and 9 years respectively and asked them: "Death has come to so many of Imam Husayn's (a.s.) devotees and you are still alive?" The children submitted: "Dear mother, we are only waiting for Imam's permission, get it for us now and then see what these 2 slaves of yours would do." Sayyeda Zainab (s.a.) sent for her brother and implored that her 2 sons be permitted to go into the battlefield. Imam Husayn (a.s.) looked at Zainab (s.a.) and then to her sons. With a heavy heart he replied "Zainab, my dearest sister, I find it impossible to deny your first and last request, though my granting it makes my heart sink."

When these 2 boys went into the battlefield they fought bravely. Sayyeda Zainab had asked them not to go near the water, so they kept their

backs to the river throughout the fight. At one point Umar ibn Saad asked: “Who are these 2 youngsters? They fight like I have seen Ali son of Abu Talib fight.” When he was told who they were he ordered his soldiers to surround the boys and attack them collectively. Aun and Muhammad were attacked from all sides. Hardly a few minutes had passed when Aun fell from his horse and called Imam Husayn (a.s.). Just at that moment another cry was heard, this time from Muhammad. Imam Husayn (a.s.) and Hazrat Abbas brought their bodies and laid them down in the tent of Sayyeda Zainab who went in Sajdah offering thanks to Allah.

Sayyeda Zainab came to the 2 bodies of young sons and addressing them said: “My dear children, now I am pleased with you for you have proved your worth and laid down your lives for truth and pleased Allah and his Holy Prophet.” Sayyeda Zainab never wept for her sons although

they were her only offspring. Such was the bravery of the mothers in Karbala which could not be found in history anywhere else.

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